



Parents Advised to Slow Down, Use Caution in Filing FAFSA Forms Online

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MADISON – Parents looking to file a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form through the free federal FAFSA website are advised to double-check that they are actually on the government site before submitting personal information.

The free federal site is www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Searching for “FAFSA” through a search engine like Google may lead parents to a third-party website rather than the federal domain. There are a number of third-party sites that provide consultation and advice on student aid applications, and their website addresses are similar to the federal site’s address. While you may be able to file the form through those websites, their services are not free and you may not be able to confirm the safety of your submitted information.

Wisconsin’s Office of Privacy Protection (OPP) offers the following advice for parents who are filing FAFSA forms online:

- www.fafsa.ed.gov is the official federal site. You can file your child’s FAFSA form for free through this website. Remember: if you’re looking for a federal site, the web address will always end in “.gov”
- Slow down! Take your time to make sure the information you are submitting is accurate and that you are comfortable submitting sensitive information through the website you are using
- Search the site for privacy statements, security notifications and details on who runs the site
- Look for any disclaimers on the nature of the site before you enter any personal information.

If you believe you may have submitted sensitive information through a suspicious website:

- You should monitor your free credit report closely. Request your free report at www.annualcreditreport.com or by calling toll-free: 877-322-8228.
 - The Fair Credit Reporting Act requires all three major credit bureaus to provide a free credit report every 12 months to consumers who request it. The Office of Privacy Protection recommends that consumers request a free report from one of the credit bureaus every 4-5 months to spread out the monitoring of your report.
- You may also wish to place a free fraud alert on your credit reports. A fraud alert notifies creditors if someone attempts to open an account in your name.
 - The “[Identity Theft Consumer Tips](#)” brochure on the Office of Privacy Protection website (privacy.wi.gov) includes contact numbers for each of the three major credit reporting agencies. This document is located on the “Fact Sheets and Statistics” page.
 - If you call one of the credit reporting agencies to add a fraud alert to your account, they are required to notify the other two to place a fraud alert on those reports as well. The fraud alert will be active for 90 days and can be renewed after the 90 days has expired.

For more information, visit the Office of Privacy Protection website at privacy.wi.gov or contact the OPP at 608-224-5163 or through the Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-422-7128.